

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 06768 091813Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6768

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, IS
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH DAYAN ON SETTLEMENTS

REF: A) STATE 211739, B) TEL AVIV 6546

1. AS INSTRUCTED IN REF A, I WENT INTO SETTLEMENTS
PROBLEM WITH DAYAN AT LUNCH SEPTEMBER 9 TO MAKE SURE
THAT THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE NATURE OF
OUR CONCERN. HE ASSURED ME UNEQUIVOCABLY THAT HE
UNDERSTANDS IT IS NOT PRIMARILY THE PROBLEM OF "SURPRISES,"
BUT RATHER THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACTIONS
THEMSELVES WHICH ARE OF GREATEST INTEREST TO US.

2. DAYAN SAID HOWEVER, AS HE HAD SAID TO YOU DURING
YOUR VISIT, THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE IN HIS VIEW FOR ANY
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, LET ALONE A BEGIN GOVERNMENT, TO
CEASE ALL SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES,
SOMETHING WHICH HAS NOT OCCURRED OVER THE PAST DECADE
DESPITE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING HERE THAT THE U.S.
REGARDS THE SETTLEMENTS AS ILLEGAL. HE ACKNOWLEDGED
OPENLY THAT WHILE THERE IS CERTAINLY A MAJOR ELEMENT
OF PRESSURE FROM THE GSH EMUNIM AND FROM ARIK

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SHRON AT WORK ATTEMPTING TO FORCE BEGIN'S HAND,
BASIC FACT IS THAT HE AND THE REST OF THE CABINET,
NO LESS THAN BEGIN, BELIEVE THAT JEWS MUST CONTINUE TO
HAVE THE RIGHT TO SETTLE THROUGHOUT THE HISTORIC
BOUNDARIES OF THE "LAND OF ISRAEL". HE WOULD BE MIS-
LEADING YOU AND US IF HE LED US TO BELIEVE
THAT THIS CONVICTION WILL BE ABANDONED IN FACE OF

AMERICAN DISAPPROVAL OR PRESSURE.

3. HOWEVER, DAYAN MADE CLEAR TO ME THAT HIS OVER-RIDING CONCERN IS TO MINIMIZE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY ON THE PEACE PROCESS. IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT HE HAS PERSUADED BEGIN TO THE DELAYED AND LIMITED SETTLEMENT PROGRAM PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED TO ME (AND TO BE DESCRIBED UNDOUBTEDLY IN DETAIL IN WASHINGTON). DAYAN BELIEVES IT IS VERY UNFORTUNATE THAT WE ARE CONCENTRATING SO MUCH ON ARGUMENTS ABOUT SETTLEMENTS AND THE PLO RATHER THAN EXPLORING EVERY CONCEIVABLE AVENUE TOWARD COMPREHENSIVE OR EVEN PARTIAL PEACE AGREEMENTS.

4. DAYAN CERTAINLY RECALLS THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO BEGIN OF AUGUST 17, AND IS FULLY AWARE OF ITS IMPLICATIONS. INDEED IT IS THAT MESSAGE WHICH LED BEGIN TO ASSURE US THAT NO NEW ACTIVITY WILL OCCUR UNTIL THE SUBJECT IS THOROUGHLY TALKED OUT AGAIN DURING DAYAN'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON. AND ALL OF THE RECENT PUBLIC DRAMA FROM ARIK SHARON AND THE GUSH EMUNIM VIA THE ISRAELI PRESS AND TV DO NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS LIVED UP TO THIS COMMITMENT IN TERMS OF WHAT HAS ACUTALLY OCCURRED.

5. DAYAN WAS FRANK IN ADMITTING TO ME THAT THE "SHARON
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PLAN," THE GUSH EMUNIM PLAN," AND ALL OF THE OTHER RECENT PUBLIC PROVOCATIONS ARE AIMED AT KEEPING THE HEAT ON BEGIN TO LIVEUP TO HIS WIDELY UNDERSTOOD CONVICTIONS IN THE FACE OF PERCEIVED AMERICAN PRESSURES TO BACKSLIDE OR SURRENDER TO US. ACCORDING TO DAYAN, SHARON HAS A UNIQUE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH BEGIN WHICH PRECLUDES BEGIN'S ATTEMPTING TO MUZZLE HIM. BUT DAYAN IS EQUALLY CONVINCED THAT BEGIN HAS LISTENED AND WILL LISTEN TO HIM , DAYAN, ON DECISIONS AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN, AS DISTINCT FROM PUBLIC FLIGHTS OF FANCY.

6. THE BOTTOM LINE IN ALL OF THIS FOR US, I FEAR, IS AS FOLLOWS: THIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ABANDON THE PRINCIPLE THAT SETTLEMENTS WILL CONTINUE. BEGIN, WITH DAYAN'S ENCOURAGEMENT, WILL SLOW DOWN THE PACE IN RESPONSE TO OUR PRESSURES, WILL TRY TO FIND LOCATIONS AND TYPES OF SETTLEMENTS WHICH MAY BE LESS PROVOCATIVE, AND WILL CONTINUOUSLY REASSURE US (AND THE ARABS) THAT ANY EVENTUALLY NEGOTIATED BORDER WILL NOT BE CONDITIONED BY THE LOCATION OF ANY EXISTING SETTLEMENTS. TO BELIEVE THAT WE WILL OBTAIN MORE, SUCH AS A TOTAL MORATORIUM, WOULD BE UNFORTUNATELY ONLY

WISHFUL THINKING.

LEWIS

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